

# The Moon — 'Bring A Piece Back'

By ERNEST ROBL

"Getting there and bringing a piece of it back is the main thing," was the way Dr. William E. Thornton put it.

The "it" he was talking about was the moon.

But Thornton — a native of Faison, who was named a scientist astronaut in September — has other things to worry about at the present time — like learning to fly jets.

Thornton, who graduated

## Service League Asks Carolina Coed Help

The Chapel Hill Junior Service league needs the help of UNC coeds to help make decorations for its annual Christmas House.

The Christmas House is a project in which the town's needy families are given gifts of food, clothing, toys and holiday decorations "in a way which will preserve the dignity of the recipients."

Any type of tree decorations such as felt ornaments are greatly needed. For further information contact Mary Anne Ragland at 929-5583.

from the University and received his medical degree from the University in 1963, returned here this week for two days of intensive astronomy training at Morehead Planetarium.

Thornton said one thing doctors have learned from astronauts who had been in orbit for some time is that they lose weight. He added that this could become a problem on extended flights, especially if there was no way to keep track of weight.

Thornton's response to the problem was to invent an instrument which measures mass rather than weight. He currently has an application pending for a patent on the device.

How did Thornton first become interested in the astronaut program?

"I've been interested in airplanes ever since I saw the first one," was part of the answer he gave.

Thornton's background, however, provides the rest of the answer.

While at the University, Thornton not only earned a bachelor's degree in physics, an Air Force ROTC commis-

sion, and a letter in football, but he also started his own electronics maintenance system.

Following his graduation in 1952, Thornton went into the Air Force and did scientific research. In 1955-56, Thornton became interested in medicine while working on medical instruments at Memorial Hospital. He returned to the University in 1958 to study medicine.

Thornton is currently participating a five-month introductory astronaut training program, which will be followed by almost a year of Air Force flight school.

Several times Tuesday afternoon Thornton mentioned something about going to the moon, but when asked when he thought he would get there, he shrugged his shoulders and said "I wouldn't hazard a guess."

But at one time while talking to newsmen, Thornton indicated that he was thinking of even bigger things: "The trip to the moon is just a stone's throw compared to some of the missions we hope to make in the future," he said with a smile.



—DTH Staff Photo by Ernest H. Robl

## North Carolina Native William Thornton

... discusses space medicine while other Astronauts look on.